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ABSTRACT

This guide features Mexican history, culture, and the environment in the years past and present. This guide discusses five periods of Mexican history, including: (1) Indian Period; (2) Colonial Period; (3) Independence Movement; (4) The Revolution; and (5) Mexico Today. Each section has goals for the students, background readings, and activities for incorporation into the lessons. (EH)

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MEXICO:

YESTERDAY AND TODAY

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Mary Patrice Koscielny

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INDIAN PERIOD

GOAL: Students will become acquainted with the Mexican Indians and have a general knowledge of their contributions.

A history of Mexican Indians starts thousands of years before the birth of Christ. The Indian groups that will be studied are the ones that settled and developed their own culture. Some of the early inhabitants of Mexico were the Olmecs, Teotihuacán, Maya, and Aztecs.

OLMECS

Specific Objective: Given facts about the Olmec civilization and art, students will be able to identify Olmec type sculpture.

One of the oldest Indian civilizations is the Olmec. They have sometimes been called the "mother culture" of Mexico. The Olmecs lived in southern Veracruz and Tabasco. The most important site was La Venta, a religious center where an estimated 18,000 people lived. They had religious leaders and rulers. They spread their religious beliefs, which focused on a mysterious god that was part human and part jaguar.

The Olmecs had skilled sculptors who carved giant heads out of stone. The Olmecs had no stone in their area to carve these giant heads. Each giant head is about 81/2 feet high and weighs about 40 tons. Scientists believe that the closest stone was about 80 miles away and that the Olmecs used rafts to float the stone down the river.

The Olmec region began to gradually decline around 500 B.C. The Olmecs, however, continued to produce magnificent objects. Their most remarkable invention was the calendar and the use of zero.

ACTIVITY:

1. After viewing pictures of the huge heads carved out of stone, the students will discuss the difficulties in producing such a work of art and speculate on who the heads represent.

2. Show the video "Origins of Mexican Civilization" (20 min.) from Educational Video (Free 30 day preview).

TEOTIHUACAN

Specific Objective: Students will be able to name two famous pyramids after being given information about Teotihuacán.

By about 400 A.D., central Mexico was controlled by a great culture called Teotihuacán. Teotihuacán was structured as a city. At one time more than 150,000 people lived there. Teotihuacán was an important religious center. The priests were the leaders of the people and religion was the center of everything. The people believed in many gods. Human sacrifices were performed in the hopes that the gods would favor them. Two well-known gods were Tlaloc, the god of rain and Quetzalcoatl, the feathered serpent, god of the winds. The sun and the moon were also worshiped. The Teotihuacán Indians were responsible for building the gigantic pyramids of the Sun and the Moon. Located a few miles outside of Mexico City, these pyramids were the center of the Teotihuacán Indians. The Pyramid of the Sun is 222 feet high and measures 750 feet square at the base. It is the largest in the world.

The Teotihuacán Indians lived very orderly lives. Their society was grouped according to social status. The most important group was the priests. They kept the calendar, measured time, and probably knew how to write.

Scientific knowledge, hieroglyphic forms of writing, a number system, and the study of astronomy and medicine became important during the time of the Teotihuacán Indians. For centuries, Teotihuacán was the center of cultural, economic, and political activity.

ACTIVITY:

1. Who were the leaders of the people in Teotihuacán?

2. What did the people build?

3. What were some of the gods the people believed in?

Show the video "Teotihuacán: City of the Gods" (18 min.) Educational Video.

MAYAS

Specific Objective: Given a variety of facts about the Mayan civilization, students will be able to name three accomplishments of the Maya Indians.

The Mayan civilization flourished in what is now Yucatán, Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador and Belize. The Mayans are considered to have developed the most brilliant of all ancient societies, reaching their greatest height between 300 and 900 A.D. They built cities, notably Chichén Itzá and Uxmal on the tip of the Yucatán Peninsula.

Theirs was a civilization of priest-rulers. The Mayans worshipped Kukulcan.. He was the Mexican god Quetzalcoatl under a Mayan name. They believed that each part of the world was ruled by a different god. The gods could bring health, good crops, and plentiful food to the people, or could send illness and hunger. Farmers prayed to Chac, the god of rain and Yum Kaax, the god of maize. Food and prayers were offered to keep the gods happy.

The Mayans were very talented scientists, architects, and artists. In science, they studied time and the stars. They also developed calendars of 365 and 360 days. The priests used these calendars to predict lucky days for all events.

In mathematics, the Mayas developed a system of numbering using zero. Their system of writing was more advanced than that of any other Indian group in Mexico.

In Mayan society had a class system that consisted of priest-rulers, nobles, workers, farmers, and slaves. The class system determined a person's job, the place they lived, and their marriage partner.

The majority of the Maya lived in cities. These cities were the center for courts of justice, festivals, and markets. The common people worked very hard to provide food for the priest-rulers and for their own families. The Maya were excellent farmers. They grew corn, beans, squash, sweet potatoes, cotton, and cacao.

Most Mayan men and women married when they were teenagers. It was customary for the newlywed couple to move in with the wife's family for up to six years. After the six years, the married couple lived near or with the husband's family for the rest of their lives.

For recreation, the Mayas liked to dance or play a kind of ball game called Tlaxtli. The game was played in a large ball court. Two teams

played against each other. The object of the game was to hit a rubber ball through a vertical ring. The players could not use their hands. They could only use their elbows, knees, and hips. The game was so difficult that when one team finally hit the ball through the ring, the game was over. This was not only a ball game, it was also used as a religious ceremony. The rulers and people of importance would sit on the top sides of the court. Often, the team that lost was sacrificed to the gods.

ACTIVITY:

1. After learning about the Mayan civilization, students will be able to answer the follow questions:
   Where did the Maya Indians live?
   Who was Kukulcan?
   What was the ball game called?
   What was the object of the game?
   What parts of their bodies could the players use?

2. Students will write a paragraph contrasting the work of Mayan farmers with modern farmers. Absence of the wheel and beasts of burden should be taken into consideration.

3. Show the video "Cities of the Ancient Mayas". Educational Video (23 minutes)

AZTECS

Specific Objective: Given descriptions of Aztec achievements in art and architecture, the student will be able to name two contributions.

The Aztecs were the last of the great pre-Hispanic civilizations. In the 13th century, the Aztec or Mexican Indians migrated from their original home on a northern lake island called Aztlán to the Valley of Mexico. In 1345 A.D., they began to lay the foundation for their capital city Tenochtitlán. Quetzalcoatl had told the people to look for an island where there was an eagle sitting on top of a cactus with a serpent in his mouth. Tenochtitlán means "Place of the Cactus". Tenochtitlán was later to become Mexico City.

Tenochtitlán was built on an island in Lake Texcoco. It's location made it very easy to defend against invaders.

The city had palaces and parks, a water system, fountains, and many

winding canals. It became an important center for culture, trade, and religious ceremonies.

The Aztecs were astronomers and mathematicians. They developed two calendars, a solar calendar and a religious calendar. Both calendars were based on the movements of the sun and stars. The solar calendar was based on the sun and had 365 days. It had eighteen months with 20 days in each month. The remaining five days were considered unlucky. The religious calendar had 260 days with twenty weeks of thirteen days each.

Life among the Aztecs was difficult and very strict. Their society consisted of ranked social groups. The priests and the warriors were at the top and the common people were at the bottom. Tenochtitlán was a government and religious center. The Aztecs farmed on what are called Chinampas. There were small plots of land cut from water vegetation in the marshes of Lake Texcoco. The plots were piled one on top of another to reach the height they wanted and covered with mud. They could then grow all sorts of crops.

The Aztecs were fierce warriors who believed it was their duty to sacrifice the men they captured in battle to their gods. The people they conquered hated the Aztecs because of the sacrifice of the thousands of prisoners that occurred.

The emperor was both a priest and a warrior. The Aztecs had over 200 gods. One of the most important deities was Huitzilopochtli, the tribal and war god. Another important god was Quetzalcoatl. The Aztecs believed that Quetzalcoatl would some day come back to earth as a fair-skinned white man with long hair and a flowing beard.

The conquest of ancient Mexico began on November 8, 1519, when Hernán Cortés landed with his men at what is now Veracruz. Moctezuma II was the emperor of the Aztecs at this time. When he heard about the arrival of the Spanish, he sent messengers with gifts of gold, silver, and precious stones. Many believe that this was Moctezuma's greatest mistake. The Spanish were greedy, and when they saw the beautiful gifts they decided to take over the Aztec wealth. The Aztecs were astounded when they first laid eyes on the Spaniards. They had never seen horses or fair men in heavy armor. They believed that the Spaniards were gods. It was also the first time that they had seen guns, which they called "thunder and lightning."

When Moctezuma first met Cortés, he thought that perhaps he was the great Quetzalcoatl coming back to take his rightful lands. Because of his uncertainty, he did not have Cortés and his men killed. Instead, Cortés took Moctezuma prisoner. Moctezuma offered no resistance and gave his

empire of millions to Cortés. Six months later, Cortés left to confront a Spanish army at Cempoala, sent by the angry government of Cuba.

Pedro de Alvarado caused the Aztecs to rebel by having a group of Aztec nobles killed during one of their ceremonies. Aztec warriors came from all over to attack the Spanish. The Spanish ordered Moctezuma to tell his people to stop fighting. He climbed on a roof to talk to his people, As he was speaking, someone threw a stone that hit Moctezuma in the head and killed him. Cortés and his men grabbed all the gold they could carry and fled the city at night in June, 1520. The Aztecs followed them and kept attacking them relentlessly until they reached the safety of Tlaxcalan. The Spanish referred to this as the night of sorrows - La Noche Triste.

It took Cortés nine months to prepare for his return to Tenochtitlán. Along with the Spanish were 25,000 Tlaxcalan men. The Spanish destroyed the aqueducts so that no water was available. Food supplies began to dwindle quickly. The Aztecs fought with great courage. When they captured some Spaniards, they took them to be sacrificed. This angered Cortés greatly. He decided to wage an all out war by burning and destroying the city piece by piece. The Aztecs were forced into a smaller place. Most of them either starved to death or died of smallpox, a disease brought in by the Spanish.

The Aztecs finally stopped their resistance in August of 1521. Tenochtitlán, what was left of it, belonged to Spain.

ACTIVITY:

1. Students will be able to answer the following questions.
   Who guided the Aztecs to the Valley of Mexico?
   Where was the Aztec capital built?
   Who ruled the people?
   What were chinampas?
   What god was most important to the Aztecs?
   How did the Aztecs believe Quetzalcoatl would return?

2. Show the video "The Rise and Fall of the Aztec Empire" Educational Video (28 minutes).

3. Imagine that you are a reporter assigned to cover the conquest of Mexico. Write a newspaper story telling about the events of the conquest. Include an interview with Cortés.

COLONIAL PERIOD

Goal: To provide students with a general background of the colonial period in Mexico, along with its political and social effects on the people.

A. For the indigenous peoples of Mexico, the Conquest radically changed their lives. One major change was the suppression of their religion. Shortly after the conquest, the friars from three Catholic orders set about bringing Christianity to the country. The first friars that came were quiet and humble and were soon able to earn the respect of the Indians. The conversion to Christianity was a mixture of abuse and genuine concern.

The friars found it easy to gain control over the Indians. The Indian rituals were very similar to the rituals of the Catholic Church. The Indians believed in many gods and the Spanish had many saints. They both prayed to and called upon these people for help.

Two religious deserve mentioning because of their genuine concern for the Indians. One was Vasco de Quiroga who set up hospitals and gave land to Indian communities. The other was the friar, Fray Bartolomé de las Casas. Bartolomé de las Casas believed that it was important that the Indians have a free choice and should not be forced to accept the Catholic faith. He devoted his life to defending the rights of the Indians.

THE VIRGIN OF GUADALUPE

An important event in the conversion of the Indians was the appearance of the Virgin Mary in 1531 to an Indian convert named Juan Diego. Ten years after the conquest, Juan Diego was climbing the hill of Tepeyac. As he was climbing, he heard a voice call his name. He turned and saw the vision of a dark-haired Madonna with bronze skin. She wore a long blue cape and a long white robe embroidered with gold. She told Juan Diego that she had come to take care of his people and asked him to tell the bishop to build a church on the place where she stood. The bishop would not believe Juan Diego. The Virgin stopped him a second time and told him to gather roses from the top of the hill. In December nothing but cactus grew on the hill. Juan wrapped the roses in his long cotton shirt, or tilma, and took them to the bishop. When Juan opened his tilma, the roses fell to the ground and a marvelous picture of the Virgin appeared on

the tilma. Finally, the bishop believed and built a church in honor of the Virgin at the spot where Juan had seen her. The appearance of the Virgin of Guadalupe in New Spain formed a link between the Indians, the church, and the Spanish. In 1737 the Virgin of Guadalupe became the patroness of Mexico.

ACTIVITY:

Answer the following questions:

1. Why could the Indians understand the friars?
2. What did Fray Bartolomé de Las Casas believe in?
3. Describe the vision the Juan Diego saw?
4. What was he told to do?
5. Why was it amazing that there were roses on the hill?

B.

It was not easy devising an efficient form of government for the Indians. Strict regulations to protect the Indians were drawn up by the Spanish Crown upon the urgings of some idealistic priests. The owner of an encomienda, a grant of Indians, was supposed to look out for the Indians' welfare and the Indians in return paid a designated amount of tribute and labor. At times this system worked fairly well, but more often the Indians were greatly exploited.

Colonial Mexico had a definite social structure which included: (a) peninsulares - Spanish-born whites sent from Spain, who became the rulers; (b) Creoles - Mexican-born whites, who were the aristocracy; (c) mestizos - the offspring of Creole and Indian parents; (d) Indians - who lived lives of poverty and slavery.

Spain was receiving many reports about Indian abuse. The king decided to do away with the encomienda system. In its place he created a position called the Viceroy who would rule in the king's place. The viceroy had great power and he was treated almost like a king. The viceroy was head of the audiencia, or the Spanish court. The audiencia represented the king and the judges were in constant touch with the king and reported to him directly on a regular basis.

The first of Spain's viceroys in Mexico was Antonio de Mendoza, who ruled in 1535. He vigilantly watched that the Indians were not being abused by the encomenderos.

The Viceregal system worked for many years in Mexico. However, the wealth of the Spaniards was increasing as the Indians became poorer. the Creoles and mestizos were considered second class citizens in their own country. They were not allowed to hold office. This system of inequality among the races brought on the movement for independence in Mexico.

ACTIVITY

Answer the following questions:

1. Why did the king send a viceroy to Mexico?
2. Who was the first viceroy in Mexico and when did he rule?
3. What did the viceroy do?
4. How did the king check up on the viceroy?

Mexico was rich in minerals. When the Spaniards came they took full advantage of this wealth. The Indians in Mexico hardly mined at all before the Spaniards came. The Spanish method of mining was crude and it was very hard on the Indians who were forced to work in the mines. The work was harsh, and the Spanish were often cruel to the mine workers. Many Indians died bringing wealth and power to the Spanish.

Wherever the mines were, cities grew and prospered. Silver was discovered in Zacatecas in 1546. Afterward discoveries were made in Guanajuato, Parral and Alamos. By 1600, silver made up 80% of Mexico's exports to Spain.

Silver also brought about the growth of haciendas, or the landed estate. Hacendados, the owners of haciendas, helped provide food for the mining towns. The hacienda was mainly self-sufficient. The hacendados planted wheat, corn, and sugar cane. Many Indians were forced to hire themselves out to hacendados. The hacendado would take care of the needs of all the people under him. He became richer while those who worked for him remained in the same condition - poor.

INDEPENDENCE MOVEMENT

GOAL: To develop an understanding of Mexico's struggle for independence and its implications for the people.

Father Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla, a Spanish priest who lived in the village of Dolores, made the first efforts to obtain independence for Mexico. He was well known for his care and concern for the Indians. He strongly wanted freedom for the Indians and the restoration of the land that was taken from them.

In the town of Querétaro, Captain Allende, the leader of a secret revolutionary group, confided to Father Hidalgo that he wanted to get rid of the "gachupines", the Spaniards who came to Mexico. Father Hidalgo agreed to raise an Indian army to support the fight for freedom.

Hidalgo was nearing his 60th year and he was not a military leader. However, on September 16,1810, he rang the church bell and called his parishioners to Mass. There he urged them to join the cause and overthrow the bad government. This action is officially known as the "Grito de Dolores". Thousands of Indians and mestizos joined the revolution that began that day.

The mestizos and the Indians were poorly armed and the Creoles and Spaniards were able to crush them quickly. Within a year Hidalgo was captured. He was tried for his crimes against Spain and shot to death on July 30, 1811. Father Miguel Hidalgo is considered the father of Mexican independence.

Today, Independence Day in Mexico is celebrated on September 16. The celebration begins at 11:00 P.M. on September 15. This is when Father Hidalgo gave the Grito. Thousands of people gather in Mexico City to hear the President give the Grito at 11:00 P.M. from the main balcony of the National Palace: "Long live Mexico! Long live independence!". In every village the mayor simultaneously gives the Grito. Afterwards, the Mexicans have fiestas that last for almost two weeks.

After the death of Father Hidalgo, another priest, Father José María Morelos y Pavón led the Mexicans in their struggle for freedom. With a well trained and disciplined army, he was able to capture Oaxaca and Acapulco. He strongly felt that Spanish sovereignty was at an end. He decided to convene a national assembly to give a constitution to Mexico. The Anáhuac Congress met for four months in Chilpancingo. Morelos asked the delegates to declare that Mexico was independent, that the only true

religion was Catholicism, and that sovereignty resided in the Mexican people.

After the convention, Morelos attacked the town of Valladolid where he was defeated by Colonel Augustín de Iturbide. Morelos was later captured, tried, convicted, and shot on December 22, 1815.

Colonel Augustín de Iturbide was a Creole from a wealthy family. He liked the ideas of independence, but would not fight with the revolutionaries. Iturbide was sent to fight against the rebel Guerrero in December of 1820. After suffering a defeat, he joined forces with Guerrero and fought for the independence of Mexico. After conferring with Guerrero, Iturbide announced his Plan de Iguala in 1821. The Plan de Iguala declared Mexico an independent nation with a constitutional monarch and Roman Catholicism as the only recognized religion.

In 1821, Mexico's flag was adopted with the symbolic colors of green, white, and red. Green stood for independence, white for religion, and red for union. In the center there is a picture of an eagle with a snake in its claws, perched on a branch on the nopal cactus. This is to remind the Mexicans of their great Indian ancestors.

Iturbide had himself declared emperor. Unfortunately, the treasury was empty and he could not pay his army or generals. He faced constant attacks from his political opponents. There was an explosive atmosphere in Mexico as the country waited for someone to lead the revolt against Iturbide. He was finally deposed by a military coup in 1823.

In 1824, Mexico became a federal republic with a constitution. The Constitution of 1824 divided Mexico into nineteen states and five territories. Each state was able to elect its own governor and legislative assembly. The first elections were held and Guadalupe Victoria was elected president. During his administration, Mexican independence was recognized by the United States and England. Between 1835 and 1836 there were several constitutions, changes of government, and unrest.

ACTIVITY

Correctly identify the following:

1. Person of Spanish parents **bom** in Mexico. _____
2. Cloth on which the Virgin of Guadalupe appeared._____
3. The father of Mexican independence. _____
4. Person of Indian and Spanish parents. _____
5. Emperor of Mexico in 1822. _____
6. The Hill where the Virgin of Guadalupe appeared. _____
7. Name for the Spaniards from Spain. _____
8. The Virgin of Guadalupe appeared to this man. _____
9. The owner of an hacienda. _____
10. The priest who continued the revolution for independence in 1813. _____

B.

A major political figure at this time was General Antonio López de Santa Anna. He was a Creole of inherited wealth and position. He was an opportunist who cared only for himself and his own ambitions. Santa Anna was president several times. He could be called a dictator even though he was sometimes a liberal and sometimes a conservative.

While Santa Anna was in power in 1835, the rebellion of Texas occurred. Mexican authorities, wanting to populate Texas, allowed migrants from the southern states of the United States to establish colonies there. In return for land they were required to swear allegiance to Mexico and adopt Roman Catholicism as their religion. Since most of the migrants were cotton planters with slaves, it was also stipulated that slaves could not be sold and the children of slaves were to be born free. At this time there were more Americans living in Texas than Mexicans. When Santa Anna changed the Constitution to give himself more control over the provinces, the Texans revolted. In 1836, Santa Anna defeated a Texas force in the Battle of the Alamo at San Antonio. Later that year, Texas forces defeated his army at San Jacinto and captured him. Santa Anna signed a treaty recognizing the independence of Texas.

The Mexican government did not recognize Santa Anna's treaty. Texas joined the United States in 1845, but Mexico still claimed it. Border disputes developed between Mexico and the United States. In April, 1846, US soldiers entered the disputed area and were attacked by Mexican soldiers. In May, the United States declared war on Mexico. This war had disastrous results for Mexico.

In the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, which ended the war, Mexico ceded a third of its territory to the United States in return for a payment of $15 million. The United States gained New Mexico, California, Utah, and Nevada.

The Mexicans were disheartened at losing more than half of their territory and their resentment toward the United States increased.

A stipulation of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo was to give the Mexicans living in the United States a year to decide if they wanted to remain or return to Mexico. Those who chose to remain were guaranteed the rights that are given to all American citizens. Thus, Mexican Americans came into existence.

After the war there was deep pessimism in Mexico. In thirty years of independence Mexico felt incapable of governing itself. Those thirty years of independence brought neither peace, nor economic development, social harmony or political stability.

BENITO JUAREZ

With the end of the war, Mexico began a new period of history. Santa Anna was permanently deposed in 1855 and Benito Juárez, a Zapotec Indian, became president in 1861. He was one of Mexico's greatest political leaders. His integrity and concern for the poor were almost legendary.

Juárez joined the liberal movement, which sought constitutional government, reduction of military and clerical power, and redistribution of the church's huge landholdings.

In the "war of reform" between conservatives and liberals (1858-1860), Juárez was provisional president of the liberals. When they won, he was elected president of Mexico in 1861.

Juárez found the government in serious financial difficulty, and stopped payment on European loans for two years. The French used this action as an excuse to invade Mexico and install Prince Maximilian as emperor. Juárez directed the war for freedom. Napoleon III hoped to be able to control all of Mexico and the liberal forces of Juárez. French forces occupied Veracruz by the end of 1861. On May 5, 1862, General Zaragoza and his Mexican forces defeated the French in battle at Puebla. This battle has come to symbolize the strength and determination of the Mexican people and is celebrated every year as "Cinco de Mayo".

In 1867, the French domination came to an end with Maximilian captured and shot by a firing squad. Juárez returned to his position and governed until 1872.

Mexicans consider Juárez one of their national heroes. He has been called the " Abraham Lincoln of Mexico," because, like Lincoln, his life is an example of goodness, kindness, brotherhood and love of liberty.

When Benito Juárez died, his vice-president, Sebastián Lerdo, assumed the presidency.

TRUE AND FALSE

DIRECTIONS: Read each statement. If it is true, write TRUE on the line. If the statement is not true, write False on the line. On the back of your paper, make each false statement true.

_____ 1. The hacienda system replaced the early encomienda.

_____ 2. The Indians were able to keep their own land.

_____ 3. Mexico became independent under Iturbide.

_____ 4. Iturbide was crowned emperor of Mexico.

_____ 5. Santa Anna fought against the Californians at the Alamo.

_____ 6. Mexico and the United States went to war in 1846.

_____ 7. The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo gave Mexico Texas and California.

_____ 8. Juárez paid all the money owed to France.

_____ 9. Cinco de Mayo celebrates the French victory at Veracruz.

_____ 10. Benito Juárez took over after Maximilian.

THE PORFIRIATO

Porfirio Díaz came to power in 1876 and is credited with bringing order to a land of strife. At the beginning of his term, Mexico had few railroads, primitive industries and sanitation, and an economy that was in a critical state. Poverty was widespread. His new order was one of " pan o palo", "bread or the club". If you obeyed you ate bread, if not, you felt the club. Díaz ruled for thirty-five years as a benevolent dictator. His special police force, the "rurales", roamed the countryside and maintained peace with cruel but effective methods. By encouraging foreign business, Díaz increased mining, industry, commerce, and production.

In order to gain foreign capital, land ownership laws were changed so that foreign investors could now own land in Mexico. In a short time, foreigners owned mines, haciendas, and large cattle ranches. Foreign holdings were the basis of Mexican economy.

As the economy grew, new social groups emerged. By 1910, a new industrial workforce was developing where the mines, factories, and railroads were located. A middle class also began to emerge. The middle class was made up of small businessmen, public and private employees, professionals, artisans, and small ranchers. For the most part, these people lived in cities.

Prosperity, however, was in the hands of a small, rich landholding group. While they made millions of dollars, the poor became poorer. Small farmers were forced to sell their land and labor on haciendas for meager wages. The Indians received no education and had less freedom than ever before.

When a financial crisis rattled the economy of the United States in 1907, it fiercely shook the foundations of Porfirio's Mexico. As foreign businesses closed, public jobs dried up. Unemployment skyrocketed. By 1910, few people wanted to see Porfirio Díaz remain in power.

ACTIVITY

In a few sentences, tell about each of the following people.

1. Juan Diego _____

_____

_____

2. Miguel Hidalgo _____

_____

_____

3. Antonio de Mendoza _____

_____

_____

4. José María Morelos _____

_____

_____

5. Antonio López de Santa Anna _____

_____

_____

6. Benito Juárez _____

_____

_____

7. Maximilian _____

_____

_____

8. Augustín de Iturbide _____

_____

_____

9. Guadalupe Victoria _____

_____

_____

10. Porfirio Díaz _____

_____

_____

ACTIVITY

In a few sentences tell what you have learned about each of the following words.

1. audiencia _____

_____

2. mestizo _____

_____

3. gachupín _____

_____

4. creole _____

_____

5. peninsulares _____

_____

6. Tepeyac _____

_____

7. Grito de Dolores _____

_____

8. Cinco de Mayo _____

_____

9. hacendados _____

_____

10. pan o palo _____

_____

THE REVOLUTION

GOAL: To help students realize the crucial importance of Mexico's Revolution of 1910, and the country's subsequent development up to the present time.

Porfirio Díaz was " re-elected " in 1910 for his eighth term. It was Francisco Madero who was to lead the revolt against the dictator. Madero was a young, wealthy intellectual who had campaigned for the presidency. Díaz had him jailed until after the elections. Madero then fled to the United States. He went to Texas where in October, 1910, he published the Plan de San Luis Potosí. This decree demanded the resignation of Díaz and honest elections. His ideas gained the support of the masses in Mexico, as well as by men like Emiliano Zapata and Pancho Villa who were popular leaders.

Díaz realized that the opposition was too great and he resigned and left for Europe. Madero was elected in October 1911. The majority of the common people - Indians and mestizos - were filled with hope because they believed that the time for justice and genuine progress had arrived.

Madero meant well, but he could not handle the many groups that opposed him. Some of these groups wanted a dictatorship again. Others called for greater reforms than Madero put through. It has been said that he offered the people democracy when what they wanted was food and land. Madero blundered on until he was assassinated and replaced by General Victoriano Huerta.

ACTIVITY

Students will write a paragraph telling what life was like for an Indian or mestizo in 1910.

Many Mexicans supported Huerta's dictatorship, hoping for peace. However, Madero's followers united behind Venustiano Carranza, a state governor, and the bitter fighting continued. President Woodrow Wilson openly sided with Carranza's revolutionaries. In 1914, U.S. forces seized Veracruz. Wilson hoped to prevent the shipment of arms from the seaport to Huerta's army. Later in 1914, Carranza's forces occupied Mexico City, and Huerta was forced to leave the country.

The victorious revolutionary leaders soon began to struggle among themselves. Carranza's armies fought those of Pancho Villa and Emiliano Zapata. Villa and Zapata demanded more extreme reforms than Carranza had planed. In 1915, the United States supported Carranza and halted the export of guns to his enemies. In revenge, Villa crossed the border in 1916 and raided Columbus, New Mexico. His men killed eighteen Americans. About five times as many Mexicans also died in the raid. President Wilson sent General John J. Pershing into Mexico, but Pershing's troops failed to capture Villa.

Emiliano Zapata was the principal champion for the cause of land reform. His motto was " Tierra y Libertad ", " Land and Liberty ". Zapata was already filled with revolutionary ideas when he worked on a hacienda. He led a small group of men in fighting the plantation owners. His goal was to break up the old estates and give the property back to the landless peones (farmhands). Zapata proposed a plan for basic land reform that was written into the Constitution of 1917. It was called the Plan de Ayala. It demanded that the land be redistributed to the peasants in the form of "ejidos", communal property.

Zapata also succeeded in breaking up the hacienda system. He was a hero to the Indians and mestizos because he worked at getting back land that rightfully belonged to them.

In 1916, Carranza's power was recognized throughout most of Mexico. he called a convention to prepare a new Constitution. The Constitution, adopted in 1917, combined Carranza's liberal policies with more extreme reforms. I gave the government control over education, farm and oil properties, and the Roman Catholic Church. It guaranteed the security of the individual and his property. It also added that the common welfare was to come before the narrow rights of the individual. It also limited the president to one term, and recognized labor unions.

Carranza did little to carry out the new Constitutional program. In

1920, he was killed during a revolt led by General Álvaro Obregón, who later became president.

ACTIVITY

Research the reasons why President Woodrow Wilson was interested in Mexico at this time.

Strong Indian influences and the new national awareness emerging from the Revolution can be seen in the art forms of Mexico. This was the era of the great muralists - Diego Rivera, José Orozco, and David Siquieros. Their works, inspired by ancient historic art forms of their country, express their ideas on political and social change in Mexico.

The most recognized murals are those of Diego Rivera. They cover the walls of the Secretariat of Education and the National Palace, both in Mexico City.

During the Revolution people in villages and pueblos were informed of events by local and traveling singers who would sing of the war. Many singers were employed by military leaders as spies. Their task was to infiltrate enemy camps performing as singers while gathering information to report to their own generals. The singers were then paid for what they could deliver.

The songs they sang were called " Corridos ". The singer, or "corridista", worked alone or in times of danger in pairs. The corrido itself is truly Mexican. It reflects popular poetry of the Mexican people, their lives, loves, work, and above all the tragedies and glories of the Revolution.

The Revolution also changed the role of women. Many women followed their men into war. Although they cooked, cleaned, and ministered to the wounded, some also picked up rifles and fought alongside their men when the battles became rough. The women of the Revolution were known as " soldaderas ".

Their part in the Revolution was great and important. Two corridos, "La Adelita" and "La Valentina", were written and sung about the women of

the Revolution.

" La Adelita " tells of the young girl who was loved by a soldier. His thoughts of his Adelita kept him alive and able to carry on the battle of the Revolution. He sings:

I am going to war to fight,
I have not lost the hope of
returning again and embracing
you.

In " La Valentina ", a soldier of the Revolution sings:

One thought dominates my mind,
and that is what will make me return;
Valentina, Valentina.
It is you that I love.

ÁLVARO OBREGÓN

Álvaro Obregón was an able man. He quickly used his position for his own gain. While he took from the government, he also gave in return. Unfortunately for politicians he imposed peace like Díaz, "pan o palo". He held power over three areas: the army, organized labor, and agrarian reforms.

Organized labor flourished under Obregón. With Zapata out of the way, Obregón began a program of agrarian reform. About 2.8 million acres of land were transferred to the hands of communal villages.

Obregón appointed José Vasconcelos as minister of education. Vasconcelos created a new kind of rural school called " La Casa del Pueblo". It was to serve the villages as a means of education for the populace. Vasconcelos established about 1000 schools that offered programs in the basic courses, music, sports, theater, and instruction in sanitation and agriculture.

In late 1923, Obregón named Plutarco Elías Calles as his successor in the upcoming election of 1924. Calles ruled Mexico from 1924 to 1934.

PLUTARCO ELÍAS CALLES

Calles carried on the revolutionary program. He encouraged land reform and enforced constitutional controls over the Roman Catholic Church. The bishops protested by closing the churches from 1926 to 1929. The closing of the churches resulted in a rebellion among the peasants. In 1929, Calles reached an agreement with church officials that allowed the Catholic Church to operate schools and churches without interference. In return, church leaders promised to stay out of political affairs.

For several years after Calles term ended in 1928, he remained the real power behind the presidency. He was responsible for the formation of the National Revolutionary Party. Until then, Mexican political parties had been temporary groups organized by presidential candidates. The National Revolutionary Party stood for the goals of the Mexican Revolution. It included all important political groups and continues in power today. It was reorganized as the Party of the Mexican Revolution in 1938, and as the Institutional Revolutionary Party in 1946.

By the 1930's, the push for reform had slowed down. Calles and many other old leaders were now wealthy landowners and opposed extreme changes. Younger politicians called for speeding up the revolutionary program. As a result, The National Revolutionary Party adopted a six year plan of social and economic reform. General Lázaro Cárdenas was named to carry it out. When Cárdenas became president in 1934, he ended Calles' power.

ACTIVITY (For further research)

1. Who were the "Christeros"?
2. Why did the United States break off diplomatic relations with Mexico in January of 1927?
3. Who was Dwight W. Morrow?

LÁZARO CÁRDENAS

Lázaro Cárdenas was inaugurated in December, 1934. People thought he was a well meaning man who would follow the lead of Calles. Cárdenas came from a poor family and never forgot the village where he was born.

Cárdenas proved to be his own man. Mexican politics was one of eliminating those who oppose you. Cárdenas proved to be skillful at eliminating his opponents. He cleared the way to rule the country as he saw fit.

Cárdenas lived a simple life in a modest home. His door was always open, especially to the poor. He tried to be a president of the people. He encouraged the organization of labor. This provided better working conditions in Mexico. He gave the villages over 45 million acres of land during his six years as president. The dreams of Zapata were becoming a reality. He finally clashed with the oil companies. These companies were mostly foreign owned and run, chiefly American and British. In May 1937, 17,000 oil workers went on strike for higher wages, better living conditions, and many benefits for themselves and their families. They went back to work when they were assured that their demands would be considered. The Labor Board decided that the workers were within their rights to ask for increases and ordered the companies to meet their demands. They refused. According to the Constitution, the lands, water, and all minerals belonged to Mexico. In reality, these companies were not the true owners of the land or oil. The companies and the government could not come to an agreement. On March 18, 1938, Cárdenas expropriated the properties of seventeen oil companies. The next day the Mexican government found itself in the oil business. Cárdenas agreed to meet some of the claims of the oil companies as to payments for investment in Mexico. The Mexicans now celebrate March 18, as their "Declaration of Economic Independence".

WORLD WAR II

After 1940 , it appeared that Mexico's politics were stable. Manuel Camacho was elected president in 1940 and served until 1946. This was the era of World War II. Mexico entered the war on the side of the Allies in 1942. In 1942 Mexico was sinking German vessels and her police were tracking down spies. The United States in return aided Mexico by making loans to help the Mexican economy and by helping to strengthen the Mexican army, navy, and air force.

Mexico's main contribution to the war effort was almost entirely economic. The country supplied raw materials and many laborers to the United States. It also made war equipment in factories that the United States helped set up. The value of Mexico's exports had nearly doubled when the war ended in 1945.

LOS BRACEROS

During the war, the United States drafted many young men. That left a need for workers in the country. The United States and Mexico agreed to begin a program of migrant labor. The workers, or "braceros", were to work of U.S. farms. The United States contracted for 50,000 braceros to be brought to the United States to work. Their salary was equal to that of a U.S. farm worker. This meant that the bracero could earn 10-20 times what he could in Mexico. News of this brought a great rush of Mexicans to the United States. Many were smuggled across the Río Grande illegally and were known as "wet backs".

At the beginning, the program was well handled. Mexican agents brought men to the border and an American official saw to it that they were properly housed. However, the program got out of hand. More and more peasants struggled to reach the United States to gain a better life. There was an influx of illegal aliens in the United States. Many eventually became United States citizens and created new lives for themselves. Those who returned to Mexico carried back new ideas and goods, changing the goals and attitudes of the Mexican people as time went on.

The United States Congress officially passed the program in 1951. Braceros were to be recruited for agriculture and railroad maintenance. Almost 3,500,000 braceros were brought to the United States between 1951 and 1960. In 1964, this agreement was finally terminated.

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ACTIVITY

In a few sentences, tell about each of these people.

1. Francisco Madero _____

_____

2. Pancho Villa _____

_____

3. Emiliano Zapata _____

_____

4. Victoriano Huerta _____

_____

5. Álvaro Obregón _____

_____

6. Plutarco Elías Calles _____

_____

7. Lázaro Cárdenas _____

_____

8. Miguel Alemán _____

_____

9. Manuel Camacho _____

_____

10. José Vasconcelos _____

_____

ACTIVITY

In a few sentences, tell what you have learned about each of the following words.

1. tierra y libertad _____

_____

2. wet back _____

_____

3. artisan _____

_____

4. agrarian reform _____

_____

5. anarchy _____

_____

6. corridos _____

_____

7. braceros _____

_____

8. soldaderas _____

_____

9. La Casa del Pueblo _____

_____

10. Plan de Ayala _____

_____

MEXICO TODAY

Today, modern Mexico is continuing its development as a nation in many areas. The hacienda system has practically disappeared because of land distribution to small farmers. Almost one-third of the land is devoted to "ejidos" (communal farms), making agriculture the most important occupation. Great improvements in agricultural machinery and irrigation methods have been achieved as a means toward increased production.

Since 1940, Mexico has grown industrially. There has been an increase of new foreign firms as well as Mexican firms. However, foreign investments in industry are under careful control by the Mexican government to insure good working conditions and that the Mexican government receives fair taxes. An increase in the number of factories accounts for a greater use of the country's natural resources. Textiles is the largest industry while the iron and steel industry are second in importance. Great advance have been made in building new roads, improving the network of railroads, and increasing the supply of electric power.

Transportation in Mexico includes railroads, buses, and automobiles. There are two major airlines for domestic and international travel. In 1969, a new 26-mile subway system was unveiled in Mexico City. It is considered to be a "visual, economic, and engineering wonder."

Reforms in education have been astounding. The law in Mexico requires children between the ages of six and fifteen to attend school. However, Mexico lacks teachers and schoolrooms to achieve an education for all people.

In Mexico there are rural schools and city schools. The rural schools are old, small, and lack equipment and teachers. In recent years Mexico has placed more importance on education and more rural schools are being built. Many rural towns are being redeveloped and new low cost housing and new schools are being added. Many villages have a vocational as well as a regular school.

Public education in Mexico is free. Since the Revolution of 1910, nearly three-fourths of the people of Mexico can read and write. Before the Revolution no more than one-fourth could do so.

The Mexican government has difficulty in finding teachers. Most of the education budget is spent on building new schools and very little

money is left to pay teachers' salaries. Because teacher salaries are low, not many people want to become teachers. Another problem is getting teachers from the cities to work in rural schools. Most of them do not want to move to small towns and villages because many do not have electricity, movies, radios, or telephones.

. Since there are not enough schools or teachers, many of the rural schools only go up to the third or sixth grade.

Mexico has many colleges and universities but the largest university is the National University of Mexico, located in Mexico City. It is one of the most outstanding universities in the country. The University was first started in 1551. President Alemán was responsible for the building of the University as it is today. It lies on the outskirts of Mexico City with a large, sprawling campus. The student enrollment reaches as much as 60,000 at any one time. It has a stadium built on an Olympic scale, and in 1968 the Olympic games were held there. The main center of attraction in the huge library building with its colorful mosaic murals surrounding it. The mosaic murals of the building depict the advance of knowledge in Mexico. Other buildings are also covered with murals, making for a colorful, pleasant atmosphere in which to pursue a higher education.

Mexico now has more than fourteen universities and is striving to meet the needs and demands of a growing nation.

Arts and crafts on Mexico reflect their ancient beginnings. When the Spanish arrived in Mexico, they marveled at the craftsmanship of the Indians.

One important art form was pottery. Potters received a special place in Indian society. Their works were more than ornamental, often they were practical items for daily use. Several items were colorfully painted and served as a symbol of a particular region or group of people.

One of the handcrafts that has changed very little in Mexico is the textiles. Woven costumes are as much the same today as they were in the days before the conquest

Workers excel in making objects with glass, wood, tin, and wrought iron. Leatherwork is also an important commercial craft. Most of the beautiful silver articles are made by hand.

Mexican artisans produce a variety of items: baskets, masks, gods eyes, guitars and musical instruments. Mexicans are always surrounded by the beauty of their heritage, whether past or present.

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In spite of the Mexican government's efforts to carry out the promises of the Constitution, problems are still present. Many people have low living standards, and a division exists between the upper and lower classes. Each year, more Mexicans move from farms to cities in search of jobs. This migration and Mexico's high rate of population growth have helped cause overcrowding and a shortage of jobs in the cities. But every year finds Mexico making slow but steady progress.

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